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ABSTRACT

Ideas submitted by middle school Youth for Justice teams are presented. Sixty-four teams from middle schools in all regions of Ohio spent 5 months researching and preparing their ideas for the Youth Summit. Ideas that identify and propose solutions and action steps to address the multiple problems of violence by and against youth are compiled in this booklet, as part of the third Youth for Justice project. The first section, "Youth for Justice Works! Impact of Youth for Justice Projects" presents complete problem solutions by student teams on site in two middle schools. Other sections are arranged by themes and contain lists of ideas submitted by teams from several schools working together at the summit. Themes include: (1) Conflicts and Abuse; (2) Violence; (3) Peer Pressure and Cliques; (4) Substance Abuse; (5) Personal Problems and School Problems; and (6) Crime, Gangs, and Guns. The Willetts Middle School Youth for Justice Survey is appended. Participants, planning committee, and others who contributed are listed. The booklet includes photographs of teams who attended the conference. (EMK)

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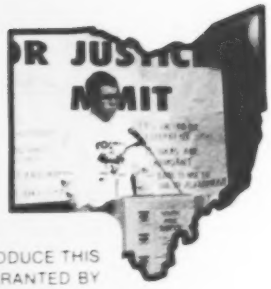

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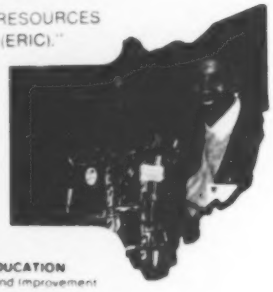

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YOUTH FOR JUSTICE

STUDENTS SPEAK OUT AGAINST YOUTH VIOLENCE

REPORT OF THE
THIRD ANNUAL
YOUTH FOR JUSTICE SUMMIT
APRIL 30, 1997
COLUMBUS, OHIO

CONDUCTED BY THE OHIO CENTER FOR LAW-RELATED EDUCATION
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE OHIO OFFICE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES

YOUTH FOR JUSTICE 1997 OHIO

AND I'M ONLY THIRTEEN

I'VE SEEN PENTAGRAMS, SWASTIKAS,
AND I'M ONLY THIRTEEN.

I'VE HEARD STORIES OF SEX, DRUGS, AND VIOLENCE,
AND I'M ONLY THIRTEEN.

I'VE SEEN THEFT AND VANDALISM,
AND I'M ONLY THIRTEEN.

I'VE HAD MY OWN THINGS STOLEN AND VANDALIZED,
AND I'M ONLY THIRTEEN.

I'VE HAD TO DEFEND MYSELF AND MY FRIENDS,
AND I'M ONLY THIRTEEN.

I'VE HAD TO STAND AND TAKE PUNCHES AND KICKS,
AND I'M ONLY THIRTEEN.

I'VE BEEN THROUGH DISCRIMINATION AND
OPPRESSION,
AND I'M ONLY THIRTEEN.

I'VE BEEN THROUGH ALL THIS,
AND I'M ONLY THIRTEEN.

BUT I CAN BRING VOICES, MAKE A CHANGE. I
HAVE THE POWER TO STOP IT FROM
HAPPENING AGAIN.
AND I'M ONLY THIRTEEN.

BY MATT STORY
8th Grade
Mason Middle School
Mason, Ohio

YOUTH FOR JUSTICE 1997 OHIO

YOUTH FOR JUSTICE 1997 OHIO

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YOUTH FOR JUSTICE

STUDENTS SPEAK OUT AGAINST YOUTH VIOLENCE

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THIRD ANNUAL
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CONDUCTED BY THE OHIO CENTER FOR
LAW-RELATED EDUCATION
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OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES

1996-1997
YOUTH FOR JUSTICE

The Youth for Justice Project is conducted by the Ohio Center for Law-Related Education (OCLRE) in special partnership with the Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS)

OCLRE Sponsors

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OCLRE Mission

The Ohio Center for Law-Related Education is a non-profit, nonpartisan organization that encourages responsible participation in the democratic process through educational programs in law and citizenship for Ohio teachers and students.

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Ohio Violence Prevention Center promoting peaceful solutions...

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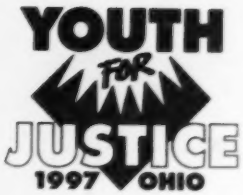

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ABOUT YOUTH FOR JUSTICE

REPORT FROM THE YOUTH FOR JUSTICE PROJECT

This booklet contains a collection of ideas from hundreds of Ohio youth that identifies and proposes solutions and action steps to address the multiple problems of violence by and against youth. It is part of the third Youth for Justice project organized by the Ohio Center for Law-Related Education (OCLRE) in partnership with Ohio schools, students, teachers, the Office of Criminal Justice Services, and OCLRE sponsors Ohio Attorney General Betty D. Montgomery, The Supreme Court of Ohio, the Ohio State Bar Association, and the ACLU of Ohio Foundation.

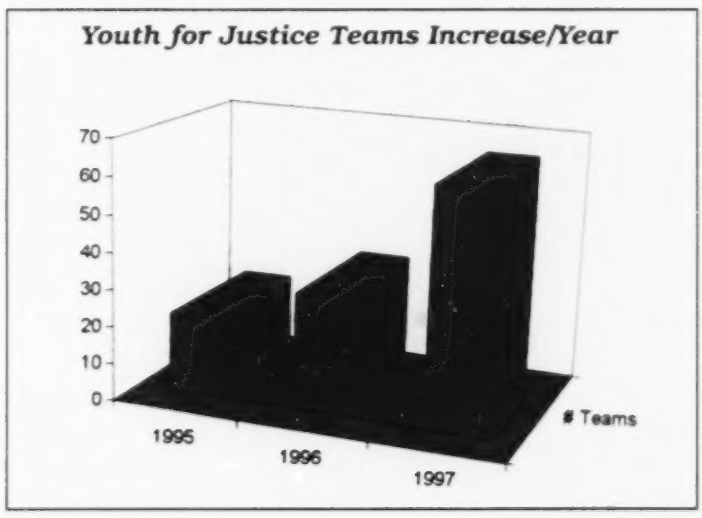
Sixty-four teams from middle schools in all regions of the state spent five months researching and preparing their ideas for this project. On April 30, 1997, five to six students representing each team gathered for a Youth Summit at the Vern Riffe Center for Government and the Arts in Columbus. This publication is a compilation of summaries submitted by the teams.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 1997 YOUTH FOR JUSTICE SUMMIT

Participation Increase

Participation doubled in 1997 from the previous year and increased nearly three-fold over 1995.

Youth for Justice Year	*Number of Teams*
1995	22
1996	32
1997	64



- 64 schools from 28 counties were represented at the 1997 Summit.

Adult Leaders Came to Listen and Learn from Youth Summit Participants

- 250 adults attended the youth-led report sessions.
- Representatives from the legislature, law enforcement officers, mayors, state and local school board members, teachers and school administrators, juvenile court judges and personnel, state agency officials, and non-profit organization leaders working with youth attended the Summit.

Youth Invited to Report to Policy-Makers

- Six of the Youth for Justice Summit schools testified before Ohio House and Senate Sub-Committees on the problems of violence by and against youth and their proposed solutions to these problems.
- Thirteen Youth for Justice students and their teachers presented their recommendations at the Governor's Juvenile Crime Summit in May, 1997.

A PROJECT TO PREVENT VIOLENCE

Statistics on violent behavior, especially among young people, are numbing. Although violence occurs at higher rates in some communities, most young people face greater risk of violence in their own lives than students of a generation ago, and all young people face the consequences of a world more resigned to violence.

Youth for Justice focuses on violence prevention. The title, "Youth for Justice," reflects the program's commitment to involving young people directly in identifying local problems and implementing solutions to them as a local resource to stem the nation's epidemic of violence. While Youth for Justice is locally designed, planned, and implemented, it is part of a national law-related education program that strives for safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools and communities. The approach to achieving this goal is to teach young people about the law and the process of problem solving so that they will lead their lives within the law.

LAW-RELATED EDUCATION AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION

This approach, called law-related education, teaches young people how the legal and political systems function and—most of all—how they themselves fit in. Law-related education, exemplified by projects like Youth for Justice, can create a learning environment that nurtures the needed skills and attitudes that will help students become problem solvers and fully prepared citizens of the future. The interactive, problem-solving approach of law-related education is an appropriate strategy in violence prevention.

A PROGRAM FOR MIDDLE-SCHOOL STUDENTS

Ohio's project focuses on middle school students because early intervention and efforts to give children resiliency skills are key to preventing delinquency and violence. Fifth through eighth grade students participated in this project. Although only five or six students could represent each team at the Summit in April, many of the reports in this booklet represent the work of sometimes a whole classroom, a whole school, or two or more schools.

JOIN US!

The 1997-1998 Youth for Justice project will be underway beginning in December and January. A training session for teachers is scheduled in January. Encourage your area junior high or middle schools to join in this exciting, educational experience. There is no fee to participate. To find out how, call the Ohio Center for Law-Related Education, 1-800-282-6556 (Ohio) or 614-487-2050 (Central Ohio).

ADDITIONAL COPIES

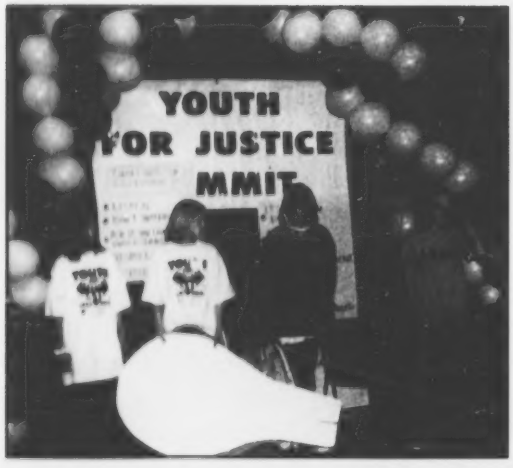
For additional copies of this report, please call the Ohio Center for Law-Related Education, 1-800-282-6556 or 614-487-2050.

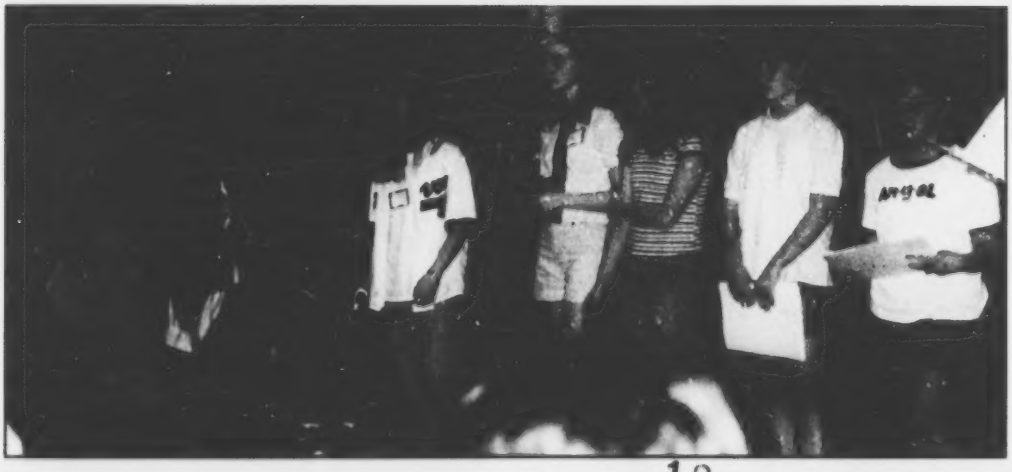
Youth for Justice Participants joined Ohio Governor George V. Voinovich at the Governor's Juvenile Crime Summit in May, 1997.

YOUTH FOR JUSTICE 1997 OHIO

We salute the students, teachers, and advisors who continually invest their time and energy to ensure the success of this youth empowerment initiative and reduce youth violence.

SCENES FROM THE YOUTH FOR JUSTICE SUMMIT APRIL 30, 1997





YOUTH FOR JUSTICE WORKS! IMPACT OF YOUTH FOR JUSTICE PROJECTS

The 1997 Youth for Justice Summit is the climax of the third year of the Youth for Justice project. The number of participating teams has tripled from the first project year, 1995, and many of the schools have continued the project from year to year. These schools have reported that the project has made a difference in the lives of their students and in the climate of their schools. Because there are new groups of students every year, however, many schools start a new project each year. Students want to do their "own" projects rather than follow up on the projects done by the students ahead of them, so most impact reporting is anecdotal.

Two schools, however, chose to build on previous years' Youth for Justice projects, extending them and enhancing them, and then presenting impact reports at the Youth for Justice Summit. U.S. Grant Middle School in Portsmouth, and Willetts Middle School in the Brunswick City Schools, provide a look at the impact of Youth for Justice in their schools.

PORTSMOUTH

U.S. GRANT MIDDLE SCHOOL

Grade Level: *8th*
Team Members: *Bobby Mahmoudishad, Neil Miller, Kylayna Pickles, Michele Truman, Josiah Young (Danny Crawford, Lori Roberts--6th and 7th Grade representatives)*
Advisor: *Donna Baker*
Problem: *Resolving Conflicts among Youth*

BRUNSWICK

WILLETTS MIDDLE SCHOOL

Grade Levels: *7th-8th*
Team Members: *Jim Arenschield, Shelby Ellenburg, Laura Krutchsnitt, Greg Meyers, Kim Stoicoiu, Dan Zula*
Advisor: *Richard Jaworek*
Problem: *Reducing Conflict in the School*

YOUTH FOR JUSTICE 1997 OHIO

IMPACT! U.S. GRANT MIDDLE SCHOOL

U.S. Grant Middle School is located in Scioto County within the Portsmouth City School District. The school's student population is 230 of which 86% of the students are eligible for free/reduced lunch and 67% come from single-parent households.

PROBLEM:

Resolving Conflicts among Youth

Besides poverty and unemployment, we have also experienced an increase in drug-related and violent crimes within our community. Based on our student surveys, students worry about verbal/physical acts of violence. Obviously, students cannot do their best under these conditions.

SOLUTIONS:

We implemented our program, Project Peace.

We continued our work that we have carried out over the last two years by maintaining and improving our monthly school-wide activities/projects to bring people together, make all students feel connected, and gain a feeling of ownership.

- ***Phase I***
  Offered teacher training in anger management/conflict resolution. All students received training through mini-courses and curriculum. Home visits by teachers were conducted, as needed. Held a school wide lock-in for students and parents to build team work and educate regarding our conflict resolution program through skits and videos. Provided lunch at a local restaurant each month for two students with improved behavior.

- ***Phase II***
  "The Peaceful Players Present" . . . Students developed and performed skits and puppet shows, as well as put on role play with elementary students at Wilson Elementary. We produced videotapes and provided them for classrooms, school libraries, and a violence shelter. We also promoted community service/awareness via *Kids News Network* on local TV access channel.

- ***Phase III***
  Peer Mediation began in summer of '97, with training workshops for teachers and student mediators to be included in the 1997-1998 school curriculum.

RESULTS:

We are comparing baseline data from our first year as Youth for Justice participants to the present at the end of the current school year. Our baseline data is measured by school data, attendance records, teacher observations, surveys, and next year, Peer Mediation records and tallies.

YOUTH FOR JUSTICE 1997 OHIO

IMPACT! U.S. GRANT MIDDLE SCHOOL

Following are some statistical impacts:

- ***Behaviors to be reduced:***
  Percentage of students receiving disciplinary referrals: 7% increase (We believe this is due to the new zero-tolerance policy.)
  Number of violent behaviors--21% decrease
  In-school suspensions--50% decrease
  Incidents of school vandalism--no change
  Number of students failing--6th grade: 13% increase; 7th grade--21% decrease; 8th grade 20% decrease

- ***Behaviors to be increased:***
  Student attendance--5% increase
  Student civility in hallways, classes--(by teacher observation): noticeable increase
  Homework completion--no change
  Parent/community involvement--12% increase

PROJECT PEACE CALENDAR

1996	
Aug./Sept.	Teacher training (included all support staff)
Sept.	Anger Management/Conflict Resolution training--mini-course for all students at all grade levels. Parent newsletter, parent workshop.
Oct.	Activities tied in with Red Ribbon Week to show correlation between drugs and violence. Parent-newspaper, home visits(as recommended). Lunch with the principal.
Nov.	More than 200 parents, teachers, and students participated in a Lock-in in the gymnasium! Planned activities, student skits, videos, pizza, door prizes, music for parent/community awareness, support, teamwork. Parent newsletter, lunch with principal.
1997	
Jan.	Conflict resolution classroom training/discussions continue. *Kids News Network*--feature story. Videos, skits developed. Parent newsletter, lunch with principal.
Feb.	Peaceful Players design tee-shirt for players, develop puppet show presentations. Parent workshop, parent newsletter. Home visits, lunch with principal.
March	*Peaceful Players Present...* skits, role play, parent newsletter, lunch with Principal, Kids News Network feature.
April	*Peaceful Players Present...* continue skits, role play, parent newsletter. Lunch with principal.
May	Essay Contest (cash prizes) "What YOUth Can Do To Promote Peace." Student survey, data analysis, *Peaceful Players Present...* puppet shows, parent newsletter, lunch with principal.
June	Peer Mediation Training for teachers and student peer mediators for implementation in next school year.

YOUTH FOR JUSTICE 1997 OHIO

IMPACT! WILLETTS MIDDLE SCHOOL

Willetts Middle School is located in Medina County in the Brunswick City School District. The school's student population is 565. The total juvenile population of Medina County is 37,400, of whom 22 were arrested for violent offenses in 1994.

PROBLEM:

Reducing Conflict in the School

The 1996-97 Youth for Justice team for the Willetts building was involved in quite a few events this school year. Some events popped up unexpectedly, and some the team knew about. The first thing we should report is that the team is a permanent part of the building culture, and works to reduce conflict.

YOUTH FOR JUSTICE PROJECT:

In the first of several meetings, the students were introduced to the overall purpose of the Youth for Justice project, which is to lower the conflict level in the building between all groups in our school community.

FACING THE CHALLENGE: YOUTH FOR JUSTICE STUDENTS AT WORK

(IN THEIR OWN WORDS)

We were all set to start to work on these areas when life threw us a curve. It began with a group of 150 8th graders, our lunch program, and the principal of our building. In two standard time periods, all of our students eat lunch. The periods are divided into four 22-minute segments. The seventh grade eats first, then the eighth, and the pattern repeats for the next lunch. The half period that you do not eat in, you spend in the gym, a game room or academic study hall. This plan was a Youth for Justice design from the previous year. It seemed to be working.

However, the second 8th grade group turned out to be bigger than all the other groups. We did not know this until after the big problem day. This large 8th grade group was having trouble getting from the gym to the cafeteria in enough time to go through the lines and finish eating before the class bell rang. They started to rush more and more each day until one day in their rush they trampled the principal. Yep, they ran him over.

In response to being trampled and the dangerous rush that this group was using to get to the lunch lines, the principal removed all field trip privileges from the 8th grade group until they could prove that they were civilized. Youth for Justice decided to tackle this problem first. We thought it fit the conflict area. The kids were mad, and the principal was also, so our group dove in.

First, we investigated the problem with the help of our advisor. We got the statistics for all the lunch populations. We inter-

YOUTH FOR JUSTICE 1997 OHIO

IMPACT! WILLETTS MIDDLE SCHOOL

viewed staff and students. We asked all of the 8th graders involved for suggestions (150 kids). We used brainstorming.

After looking at the problem and deciding on a strategy, we opted to send one of our team members in to negotiate with the principal. Our solution was simple. We switched the 7th and 8th grade groups in the second lunch. The 8th graders would be coming from all over the building instead of from the gym, eliminating the rush. The 7th grade group was 50 students smaller, so they could come from the gym without rushing.

Now we had to put our plan into effect. We sent the student chosen to be the ambassador to propose the plan to the principal. He agreed to the terms and the plan was tested for a week. It worked according to expectations and the field trips were returned to those 8th graders.

Other Results from Youth for Justice Project Involvement

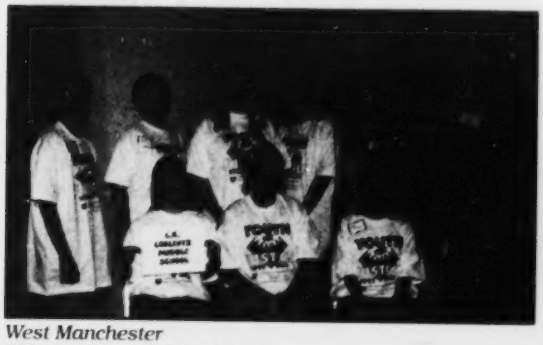
- Five Members (out of the eight involved) in the Youth for Justice team attended a Student Council seminar for training.
- Many of the Youth for Justice team are now members of the Willetts Student Council.
- Youth for Justice team members conducted a survey of the entire school population of 575 students and staff. (See Appendix.)
- A second survey was sent to prioritize among the six problems identified by the first survey.
- A skit was written to highlight the major problem of verbal abuse and how that can lead to physical fighting. The skit suggested conflict resolution strategies.
- Youth for Justice students were selected to represent their school at the Northeastern Ohio Global Issues Seminar, a mini-United Nations. They were chosen to apply what they had learned in the Youth for Justice Project to strategies for world peace.
- Two of the Youth for Justice team members were chosen to represent the student body on the district-wide discipline committee. They are working with administrators, parents, teachers, and other students to make Brunswick City Schools a safer place in which to learn and work.

YOUTH FOR JUSTICE HAS MADE A DIFFERENCE AT WILLETTS!

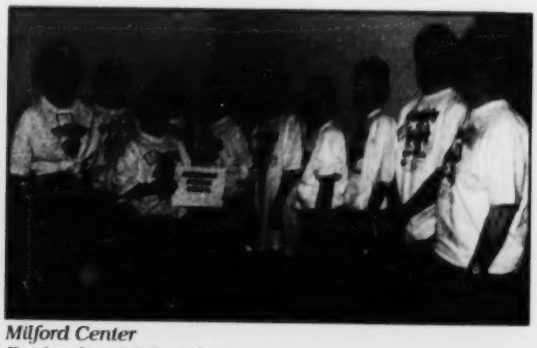
In conclusion, the Youth for Justice team members report, "There is a hint of pride in all of us that we made our school a better place to be."

YOUTH FOR JUSTICE 1997 OHIO

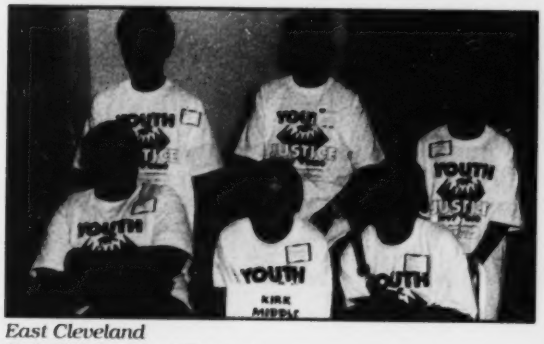
THEME 1
CONFLICTS AND ABUSE



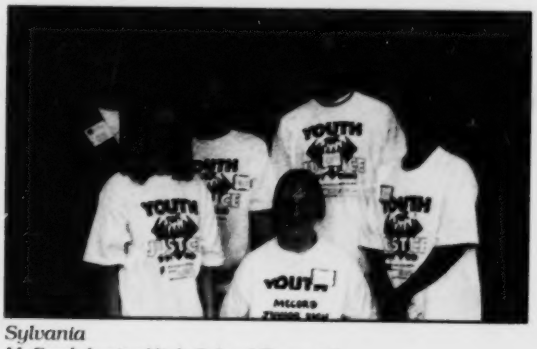
West Manchester
C.R. Coblentz Middle School
Grade Level 7th
Team Members: Vanessa Davis, Emily Eales, Aaron Kemp, Steven Langley, Abbey Sauer, Beth Wise, Lia Wise
Advisors: Don Rusk, Lynda Bragg
Problem: Unwelcome Behavior



Milford Center
Fairbanks Middle School
Grade Level: 6th
Team Members: Kristen Carl, Erin Dunbar, Tess Emerson, Gastin Green, Chad Miller, David Wampler
Advisor: Sue Lowery
Problem: Stop Fights with Conflict Resolution



East Cleveland
Kirk Middle School Team #2
Grade Level: 7th
Team Members: David Billingsley, Charles Jones, Reaver Ray, Kimberly Taylor, Craig Toler, Miashonae Willis
Advisor: Jacqueline Massencale
Problem: Abuse and Its Results



Sylvania
McCord Junior High School Team #2
Grade Level: 8th
Team Members: Ben Franco, Kathleen Hanvey, Ashley
Advisors: Jody Hess, Courtney Velker
Problem: Verbal Abuse

Springfield
Schaefer Middle School
Grade Level: 8th
Team Members: Aundrea Black, Travis Delpinal, Eric Etherington, Tashanna Hammond, Robert Holtz, Trisha Klawon, Aaron Padgett, Erin Scott
Advisors: Ellie Bahns, Monica Brown
Problem: Harassment and Bullying

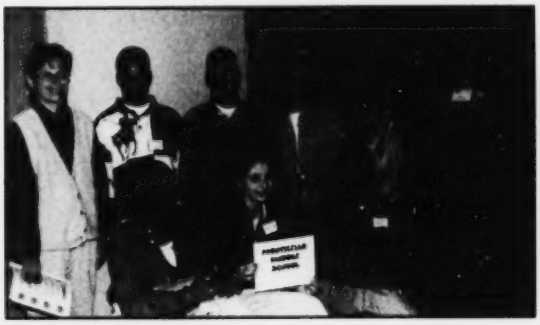
Springfield
Simon Kenton Elementary School
Grade Level: 5th
Team Members: Ashten Barnes, Sarah Lloyd, Ashley Mattimore, Megha Salani, Sara Sparks
Advisor: Jacqueline Reeb
Problem: Prejudice in the Elementary School

YOUTH FOR JUSTICE 1997 OHIO

"AT THE MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL, STUDENTS ARE CHALLENGED TO LEARN HOW TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS IN A PEACEFUL AND PRODUCTIVE MANNER."

Columbus
Franklin Alternative Middle School
Grade Level: 6th - 8th
Team Members: Aaron Bell, Lamar Bland, Christianne Lawson, Carla Kirk, Adhanet Habte, Shannon Thurston
Advisor: Victoria White
Problem: Gossip and Rumors

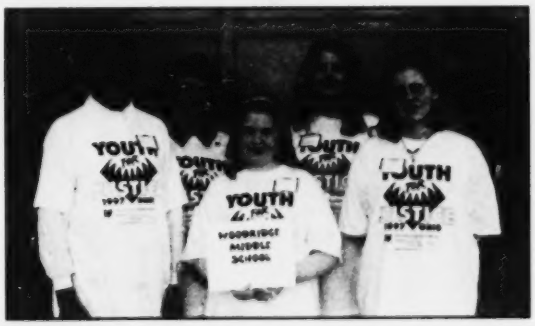
Reynoldsburg
Hannah Ashton Middle School
Grade Level: 6th
Team Members: Christina Dawkins, Colleen Lorencen, Sarah McManus, Megan McMillan, Bonni Melchi, Rachael Solvig
Advisor: Vic Doritan
Problem: Student Conflicts and Peer Mediation



Cleveland
Monticello Middle School
Grade Level: 7th - 8th
Team Members: Margot Benjamin, Demetrius Vaughn-France, Daniel Miller, Dashena Snoddy, Ayana Thomas
Advisor: Joan Organ, Marvin Watson
Problem: "He Said, She Said" Gossip

New Carlisle
Olive Branch Middle School Team #1
Grade Level: 8th
Team Members: Drew Brown, Stephanie Conn, Melissa Dalton, Andy Diller, Brad Gilbert, Andy Leighty
Advisor: John Maxwell, Jill Heck
Problem: Sexual Harassment

Washington Courthouse
Washington Courthouse Middle School
Grade Level: 6th - 8th
Team Members: Brad Brobeck, Chris Dixon, Mandy Duncan, Amy Edwards, Eddie Forrest, Randall Warner
Advisor: Tracie Rush
Problem: Physical and Emotional Violence



Peninsula
Woodridge Middle School
Grade Level: 6th - 8th
Team Members: Laurie Krachinsky, Glenda Smith, Cara Waybright, Molly Zantow
Advisor: Susan Toth
Problem: Name Calling

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YOUTH FOR JUSTICE 1997 OHIO

THEME 1
CONFLICTS AND ABUSE

PROBLEM:

Conflicts are normal in all relationships. At the middle school level, students are challenged to learn how to resolve conflicts in a peaceful and productive manner that respects the rights of all concerned and leads to continuing good relationships.

Students conducted research into the types of conflicts and abuse in their schools and/or in their communities. Some schools created extensive surveys that they administered to their classmates or the whole school. Through their research, students found various types of problems, including:

prejudice based on misinformation that keeps students from getting to know each other

name calling

harassment

spreading of gossip and rumors

verbal abuse

other types of abuse such as threats, fear, bribery, emotional abuse, physical abuse

SOLUTIONS:

Students researched possible solutions to the problems of conflict and abuse, gathering information on programs that had worked in other schools and communities, as well as developing their own solutions. Many of the Youth for Justice teams began programs in their schools that have resulted in easing of conflicts and made their schools calmer places of learning. Some of the solutions include the following:

- Curb student conflicts by stricter discipline and expulsion policies, playground patrols, assigning specific teachers to handle discipline, training the community to deal with conflict, and hiring police to patrol the school and school grounds.

- Eliminate prejudice in schools by encouraging a greater appreciation for differences, creating an atmosphere in which people get to know each other, and learning to interrupt discriminatory actions. Students should read about other cultures and take the time to interact with people outside their social groups; parents should provide opportunities for children to meet different types of people; and schools could partner with schools that are more diverse in order to give students opportunities to interact.

- Increase student attendance at a school program called FREE CHOICE that promotes the idea of letting the choices students make today be choices they can live with tomorrow. The organization conducted campaigns aimed at positive decision making, held a peace day, handed out peacemaker awards, and brought in speakers to talk about how to handle conflict situations.

- Train students in peer mediation, offer classes in conflict resolution for students and parents, and make conflict resolution activities a part of Saturday School detentions.

- Attach the *Six Steps for Resolving Conflicts* from the Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management to the student handbook.

- Create a three-step program to (1) raise awareness of harassment; (2) establish conflict mediation; and (3) train students in peer mediation. Write a play about harassment to present to students to raise awareness of harassment and the three-step program.

- Stop gossip and rumors by getting students involved in a committee to solve the problem, encouraging them to see the guidance counselor, having students write an essay on telling the truth, and promoting extracurricular activities.

- Stop verbal abuse by creating a program of positive reinforcement. The program would award gold slips for students giving compliments or refraining from derogatory comments; the slips would be put in a drawing for prizes, with the winner announced over the school P.A. system.

- Create centers in communities so that child abuse victims as well as the abusers can get help; encourage parents to go to parenting programs, especially if they were abused as children; and organize a school campaign to stop abuse.

- Challenge the media to make public service commercials about stopping the cycle of child abuse.

- Draw up a "Top 10" list of the types of gossip and rumor-spreading that might prompt students to react violently. Using this information, develop a role-play activity entitled, "He said, she said" which highlights both the wrong way and the right way to handle a rumor.

- Stop sexual harassment and bullying by writing a clear policy about harassment and asking administrators to enforce the policy. Establish a school "hot line" for students with harassment concerns.

- Ask local colleges to provide psychology and education students to talk to students about their problems at middle-school age and to be good listeners and role models.

YOUTH FOR JUSTICE 1997 OHIO

THEME 2
VIOLENCE

Batavia
Amelia Middle School Team #2
Grade Level: 7th
Team Members: Cannie Carpenter, Josh Gray, Megan Marler, Kyle Smith
Advisors: Scarlett Meyer, Joyce Siler
Problem: Raising Self-Esteem to Stop Violence

Springboro
Clearcreek Elementary School
Grade Level: 5th
Team Members: Daniel Acree, Ashely Cole, Tara Duvall, Westin Fox, Matt Grable, Emily Saluke
Advisors: Stacy Kozar, Sylvia Rodberg
Problem: Violence on the School Bus

Cincinnati
North College Hill Middle School
Grade Level: 7th
Team Members: Deanna Brown, Ken Devers, Morgan Devers, Angela Gaddis, David McAfee, Karissa Rodriquez
Advisor: Liz Baker
Problem: Discord in the Hallways

Dayton
Radcliff Middle School
Grade Level: 6th - 8th
Team Members: Regina Brewer, Dominique Champion, Danielle Howard, Amy Moore, Shane'e Tunstall, Amber Washington
Advisor: Mary Walker
Problem: Effects of Violence/Why We Must Stop It

Toledo
Robinson Junior High School
Grade Level: 7th - 8th
Team Members: Matthew Calhoun, Branda Hunter, Alisha King, Dennis Smith, Starcha White
Advisor: Diane McClellan
Problem: Negative Behavior in the Hallway

St. Bernard
St. Bernard/Elmwood Team #1
Grade Level: 7th - 8th
Team Members: Kelly Barlow, Melissa Byrd, Ron Freimuth, Louie Horn, Joey Turner, Ashley Williams
Advisor: Sgt. Bob Feichtner, Patricia Seta
Problem: Violence at the School House Door

YOUTH FOR JUSTICE 1997 OHIO

"MORE AND MORE OFTEN, STUDENTS ARE USING VIOLENCE TO SOLVE PROBLEMS, INSTEAD OF FINDING PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS."

Canton
Crenshaw Middle School
Grade Level: 6th
Team Members: J.P. Iacino, Ebony Martin, Katie McKelley, Christina Mills, Alex Murutes, Tyssen Neading
Advisor: Meg Echenrode
Problem: Violence in Society

Mount Vernon
Mount Vernon Middle School
Grade Level: 7th
Team Members: Mike Bessette, Chris Hays, Vernon Pikaart, Shawn Rhinebolt, Chase Sherman, Kyle Szabo
Advisor: Mary Samuell
Problem: Repeat Violent Behavior

Hubbard
Reed Middle School
Grade Level: 8th
Team Members: Ryanne Allred, Maria Bohrer, Ashley Carsone, Alison Conklin, Diana Diefenderfer, Micholene Holler, Nicole Hudy
Advisor: Toni Haidaris
Problem: Violence Leads to Low Self-Esteem

Akron
Riedinger Middle School
Grade Level: 8th
Team Members: Cameron Collins, April Eboch, Erick Flores, Theda Grant, Serena Mak, Rakesh Patel
Advisor: Joan Schrader
Problem: Angry Words Leading to Fighting/Abuse

St. Bernard
St. Bernard/Elmwood Team #2
Grade Level: 7th - 8th
Team Members: Paul Combs, Kacie Harrison, Chelsey Pelfrey, Tiffany Stroeer, Ricky Turner, David Wallman
Advisor: Sgt. Bob Feichtner, Patricia Seta
Problem: Violence at the School House Door

Columbus
Starling Middle School
Team Members: Tiffney Jarvis, Brandy Morris, Bonnie Whaley
Advisors: Linda Parzero and Destrie Larrabee
Problem: School Conflict: Alternative Forms of Conflict Resolution

(Not Pictured) Franklin Furnace: Ohio River Valley Youth Center; Team Members: Title I MIP and CSI fifth period class: Jonathan, Frank, Lucas, Damian, Raymond, William; Advisors: John Kantz and Eric Floyd; Problem: Creating a Violence-Free Community

YOUTH FOR JUSTICE 1997 OHIO

THEME 2
VIOLENCE

PROBLEM:

Violence in schools and other similar institutions creates unsafe environments where learning becomes difficult. School violence can adversely affect community support for schools and, finally, the health of a community itself.

Having determined that school violence is on the rise and needs to be more effectively addressed, students chose various ways to break down the types of violence found in schools. They did research, compiled statistics, and used surveys to poll teachers, students, and even bus drivers in order to identify specific problems. Among the problems identified were the following:

negative behavior in the hallway, which reinforces violent solutions and leads to negative classroom behavior

use of angry words or inappropriate language, spurring violent behavior

disruptive classroom behavior which reduces available instruction time

inability to handle "minor" violent offenses, making the handling of more serious matters difficult or impossible

doubly-dangerous violence on school buses

hallway shoving, profanity, and property destruction, evidencing lack of self-esteem and respect for others

damaged school and community reputation resulting from too many violent acts

SOLUTIONS:

Having compiled research and survey results, students suggested many steps to address the problems they identified, including the following:

- Organize workshops to train students in anger management and peaceful problem-solving. Make attendance mandatory for those caught fighting.

- Watch and discuss videos about violence, study famous peacemakers, and identify personal heroes.

YOUTH FOR JUSTICE 1997 OHIO

THEME 2
VIOLENCE

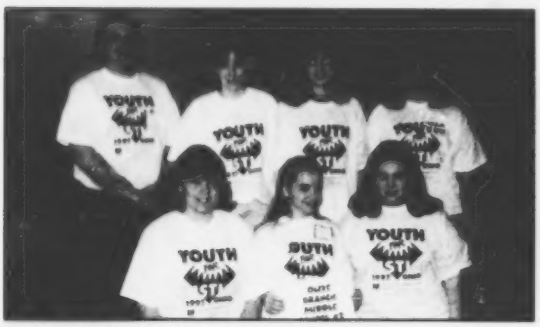
- Compose personal books about conflict resolution, chart daily conflicts, and study graphed results.
- Encourage membership in a school club opposing student violence.
- Plan a "Peace Day."
- Monitor school hallways and provide consequences for disruptive behavior. Reward students who are not cited for misbehavior.
- Make use of anonymous student monitors who would notify the nearest teacher of potentially violent situations.
- Engage a full time peer mediation counselor.
- Include parents when counseling fighting students. Expect a parent to spend a day in school with his/her child following a suspension.
- Display posters encouraging students to monitor hostile language.
- Post solutions for avoiding violence in visible places around school and encourage students to share solutions.
- Organize an assembly to teach teens about domestic violence. Follow up with a counseling session and provide community resource information.
- Set up an anonymous teen-to-teen hotline after school hours to address abuse or other relationship issues.
- Arrange field trips to juvenile correction centers, detention centers, or courts.
- Install video cameras on buses and consider hiring bus monitors.
- Make an awareness video for students on bus conduct and safety issues.
- Read "encouraging quotes" during morning announcements and make copies to distribute and display.
- Organize a day to share ways in which students and community members make a positive difference in the lives of others.

YOUTH FOR JUSTICE 1997 OHIO

THEME 3
PEER PRESSURE AND CLIQUES

Cincinnati
Becker Elementary School
Grade Level: 5th
Team Members: Angela Bridenbaugh, Tabitha Kessen, Bianca Laney, Tammie McDonough, Brittany Mendoza, Ashley Menzer
Advisor: Mike Lynch
Problem: Managing Pressure from Others

Coshocton
Coshocton High School Team #1
Grade Level: 7th
Team Members: Haley Chadwick, Tara Chaney, Samantha Gauerke, Maggie Greer, Thao Nguyen, Carlyle Shaw, Megan Staron
Advisor: Nancy Hatem
Problem: Cliques and Rumors



New Carlisle
Olive Branch Middle School Team #2
Grade Level: 8th
Team Members: Jennifer Eckhart, Jessica Hibbitts, Chad Hines, Missy Holland, Paula Lake, Jessica Sark
Advisor: John Maxwell
Problem: Teen Pressures

Solon
Orchard Middle School
Grade Level: 6th
Team Members: Jasmine Baylor, Mike Carey, Tom Catania, Ben Gaeth, Vince Gioiella, Jamie Rudick, James Walter, Jennifer Wilson
Advisor: Martha Keeney
Problem: Preventing Fights

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"STUDENTS MUST MANAGE PEER PRESSURE DAILY. OFTEN THEY ARE DARED TO DO THINGS THAT THEY DO NOT WANT TO DO AND KNOW THAT THEY SHOULDN'T DO."

Cleveland
Martin Luther King and Whitney Young Middle Schools
Grade Level: 6th - 8th
Team Members: Karima Muhammad, Nicole Perrymond, Tikila Rufus, Curtis Taylor, Ayanna White, Dale Williams
Advisor: John Roddy
Problem: Support Groups to Help Say "No"

New Lebanon
New Lebanon Middle School Team #1
Grade Level: 7th - 9th
Team Members: Denise Anders, Cassy Joo, Justin Savage
Advisor: Pam Crabtree
Problem: Disrespect between Cliques at School

Camden
Preble Shawnee Middle School
Grade Level: 8th
Team Members: Michelle Arvin, Kelli Brewer, Robbie Brock, Amy Chamberlain, Tom Walters
Advisor: Diane Burnside
Problem: Effects of Cliques on Individuals

Reynoldsburg
Renoldsburg Middle School
Grade Level: 7th - 8th
Team Members: Jack Monts De Oca, Rachel Dillon, Alyssa Peck, Megan Sanders
Advisor: John Hall
Problem: Community Respect and Safety Issues

Cleveland Heights
Roxboro Middle School
Grade Level: 8th
Team Members: Elizabeth Currey, Dale Ford, Kori Gail, Matthew Resseger
Advisor: Anne Hallford
Problem: The Influence of Peers on Teen Drug Abuse

Springfield
Warder Park Wayne Elementary School
Grade Level: 5th
Team Members: Tiffany Cydrus, Ashely Davidson, Michelle Frock, Amber Mann, Tony Mathers, Kelli Sproles
Advisor: Susan Stuckey
Problem: Peer Pressure

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YOUTH FOR JUSTICE 1997 OHIO

THEME 3

PEER PRESSURE AND CLIQUES

PROBLEM:

School cliques are the first non-family social groups young people become a part of, and they are the strongest source of peer pressure youths face. Students must manage negative peer pressure daily. Often they are dared to do things that they do not want to do and know that they shouldn't do. Peer pressure uses tactics such as teasing, verbal and physical harassment, violence, and exclusion from the clique when youth do not "go along" with everyone else.

Youth for Justice research in this area found that peer pressure is especially influential on young people with low self-esteem. Students join cliques in order to "fit in" and be popular. School-based surveys find 41% of students aged 11-15 feel pressured to smoke, 27% feel pressured to drink, and 31% feel pressured to be sexually active. These findings are consistent with national statistics.

Peer Pressure has many undesirable consequences such as:

- burning gang symbols into hands and arms
- smoking
- drinking
- using drugs
- having sex before marriage
- fighting
- disrupting families
- spreading false rumors

SOLUTIONS:

Students explored different examples of negative peer pressure. Their solutions included a combination of prevention, awareness, and coping mechanisms for students to combat the adverse effects of peer pressure and cliques. Youth for Justice teams found that effective programs included a comprehensive cooperative effort by parents, teens, and school personnel. Specific suggestions included the following:

- Create a video for classrooms demonstrating positive and negative ways of dealing with peer pressure.
- Parents and teachers should practice with children ways that they can handle peer pressure.

YOUTH FOR JUSTICE 1997 OHIO

THEME 3
PEER PRESSURE AND CLIQUES

- Parents should participate in support groups to help their kids cope with peer pressure.
- Increase the number of teachers at morning arrival time at school.
- Legislators need to support parents, teachers, and school officials by providing Ohio schools with money to increase class choices, to improve textbooks, and to provide for more teachers. This will allow students more external choices, reducing dependence on cliques.
- Start a hot-line to help teens relieve their frustrations. Give them someone to talk to.
- Create a peer pressure counseling center.
- Develop a chat room in school where kids can talk to other teens about their problems.
- Give students positive things to do. Have more extracurricular activities such as intramural sports, and more recreational, and social activities such as dances and midnight basketball.
- Students should set goals for themselves and try to achieve these goals.
- Teenagers can wear anti-peer pressure ribbons to be worn at anti-peer pressure week at school.
- Develop a skit demonstrating strategies for dealing with peer pressure. Perform the skit at a school assembly.
- Make flyers and posters with advice on how to deal with peer pressure.
- Develop a peer mediation program to deal with peer pressure. Train students to be peer mediators.
- Conduct surveys to monitor the progress of reducing peer pressure.
- Develop a program of respect for others. Start with a "Compact of Respect." The compact is a rule book to guide behavior toward others. Make "respect" the "theme of the day." Set high standards for students and staff.
- Train all students in anger management and conflict resolution.
- Develop a student court to deal with severe offenses.

YOUTH FOR JUSTICE 1997 OHIO

THEME 4
SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Dayton
Dayton Public Schools
Grade Level: 8th
Team Members: Olakunle Adegible, Shermeca Howard, Nastassia Jackson, Latia Johnson, Kenneth Jones, Preshes Matthews, Erica Sanders
Advisors: Patricia Allen Day
Problem: Kids Smoking in School

Sylvania
McCord Junior High School Team #1
Grade Level: 8th
Team Members: Josh Blain, Tyler Chivington, Erica Fry, Stephanie Jones, Ashley Medina
Advisors: Kathy Stoll, Courtney Velker
Problem: Smoking and Peer Pressure

Youngstown
United Methodist Community Center
Grade Level: 7th - 8th
Team Members: Tina Anderson, Doreen Block, Theordore Block, Kelly McCollough, Martia Phifer, George Revere
Advisors: Booker Newberry, Juanita Pasley, Willina Porch
Problem: Tobacco's Door to Other Drugs and Violence

YOUTH FOR JUSTICE 1997 OHIO

"SMOKING IS INCREASINGLY COMMON IN MIDDLE SCHOOL. TEENS WHO SMOKE ARE MORE LIKELY TO EXPERIMENT WITH ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS."

Springboro
Springboro Middle School
Grade Level: 7th
Team Members: Candice Conway, Matt Poeppelman, Dorice Smith, Jennifer Sun, Scott Yapo
Advisors: Anne Monti
Problem: Alcohol and Cigarettes–Ways to Fight the Problem

Lancaster
Thomas Ewing Junior High School Team #2
Grade Level: 8th
Team Members: Amy Lynn Agosta, Katherine McCurdy, Chelsea Petersein, Ashlee Street
Advisors: Christopher Ensign, Kathie Gallagher
Problem: DARE to Stay Free of Substance Abuse

Youngstown
Volney Rogers Junior High School
Grade Level: 8th
Team Members: Quianna Bills, Seth Gastor, Charity Pappas, Eric Wegenot
Advisor: Penny Wells
Problem: Alcohol and Teenagers Don't Mix

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THEME 4
SUBSTANCE ABUSE

PROBLEM:

Substance abuse is an acute problem among teens and pre-teens. The most popularly abused substances are cigarettes, alcohol, and other drugs. There is concern that early experimentation will lead to abuse of more serious drugs such as cocaine and heroine. It is estimated that 80%-90% of the people who smoke started before the age of 20. And, 2 out of 3 smokers begin by age 12. Unless current patterns change, more than five million of today's young people will die because of tobacco-related illnesses. Six out of ten young smokers say it is easy to buy cigarettes despite laws against underage tobacco sales. Similarly, drinking and driving kills 10 teenagers every day nationwide. Youths who have friends who drink, are more likely to drink, too. Approximately 60% of all deaths are related to drugs and alcohol use. Of that 60%, 30% of the deaths are youth under the age of 21.

Substance abuse is triggered by a number of factors. Youth feel pressured to go along with the crowd. Teens feel like they are cool because of advertising, television shows, and movies. Juvenile prosecutors, local police, and probation officers note that youth also try these illegal substances out of boredom.

Some of the effects of substance abuse include poor health and violence. Alcohol and drugs are involved in many cases of vandalism, theft, and other juvenile crime. Drunk driving is the single leading cause of death among 15-24 year olds. Alcohol abuse is believed to be as high as 15%-20% among high school drop-outs.

SOLUTIONS:

- Ask community leaders to support community centers where teens can engage in various recreational activities at little or no cost. They will have access to counselors to help them with problems.
- Sponsor fund-raisers to help pay for the community center in one city.
- Start a teen hot-line for youth tempted or involved with drugs.
- Institute peer mediation programs allowing students to resolve their conflicts.
- Don't stay at a party where underage drinking is occurring.

YOUTH FOR JUSTICE 1997 OHIO

THEME 4
SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- For those addicted to drugs, alcohol, or cigarettes, participate in summer camps that deal with teens who are or were once addicts.
- Establish a resource center with informational materials for students who have substance problems.
- Develop an education curriculum dealing with drugs and alcohol that is taught at an early age and continues throughout the students' education.
- Develop awareness programs to let youth know it is NOT cool to smoke, drink or do drugs.
- Promote a smoke-free environment at school as part of Red Ribbon week.
- Have morning announcements that use positive peer pressure to educate about the dangers of smoking [and other substance abuse].
- Sponsor a poster competition promoting a smoke-free environment.
- Consistently enforce the school rules on smoking.
- Pressure community merchants not to sell alcohol or cigarettes to minors.
- Organize regular assemblies to educate students on the adverse effects of smoking.
- Start a mentoring program to help students who already have a problem with smoking or other drugs.
- Have "Smoke-Talk Sessions" once a week to discuss problems of smoking.
- Teachers can make assignments related to smoking such as essays, collages, or debates.
- Develop a "No Smoking" contract for students.
- Teens should realize that their major responsibility is to be responsible for yourself.
- Don't get in a car with someone who has been drinking; instead call your parents or another friend to pick you up.
- Hang out with friends who don't drink.
- Take part in the Prom Promise.

YOUTH FOR JUSTICE 1997 OHIO

THEME 5
PERSONAL PROBLEMS AND SCHOOL PROBLEMS

Batavia
Amelia Middle School Team #1
Grade Level: 8th
Team Members: Cammie Carpenter, Robin Davidson, Josh Gray, Megan Marler, Julie Pederson
Advisors: Scarlett Meyer, Joyce Siler
Problem: Improving Student Attitudes and Self-Esteem

Coshocton
Coshocton High School Team #2
Grade Level: 7th
Team Members: Deana Hall, Ashley Hagans, Randi Levingood, Rachel McCleery, Kayla Mowery, Sheanell Sees, Andrea Sweitzer
Advisors: Nancy Hatem
Problem: School Pride

Cincinnati
Indian Hill Middle School
Grade Level: 7th - 8th
Team Members: Lauren Backman, Alex Conn, Jacqui Copeland, Leslie Hughes, Claire Kenny, Pritesh Mehta, Nick Rennerker, Anne Stephens
Advisor: Joanne Herrmann
Problem: Respect in the School Environment

East Cleveland
Kirk Middle School Team #1
Grade Level: 8th
Team Members: Khalee Al Amin, Theresa Daniels, Sierra Hubbard, Antione Moss, Tanisha Stewart, Katherine Thompson
Advisor: Jacqueline Massencale
Problem: Teen Pregnancy

(Not Pictured)
Nelsonville
Hocking Valley Community Residential Center
Grade Level: 6th - 10th
Team Members: Vance, Branden, Michael, Chris, James, Bob
Advisors: Joe Bossart, Ellen Martin
Problem: Lack of Confidence in Representative Government

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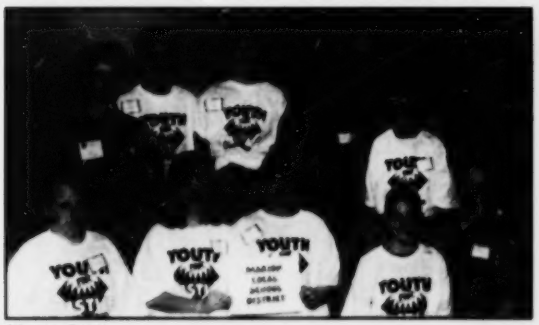
YOUTH FOR JUSTICE 1997 OHIO

"LACK OF SELF-ESTEEM MAY MANIFEST ITSELF IN ACTS OF VANDALISM, CHEATING, AND INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS LEADING TO EXPULSION."

Cuyahoga Heights
Cuyahoga Heights Middle School
Grade Level: 8th
Team Members: Nicole Cheraso, Angela Neal, Tia Protopapa, Jessica Ratkosky, Mike Wise, Matt Wyman
Advisors: Bonnie Frye
Problem: Leadership Camp: Lead the Way to Peace-Building in Your School

Delta
Delta Middle School
Grade Level: 7th
Team Members: Heidi Dick, Matt Fager, Jenny Gray, Erika Heineman, Joey Howard, Stephen Mignano, Linsday Vaughn
Advisor: Dennis Ford
Problem: New Student Intervention



Maria Stein
Marion Local Schools
Grade Level: 6th
Team Members: Alan Frey, Nikki Link, Margo Moeller, Tammie Siegrist, Kirk Stucke, Marianne Wuebker
Advisor: Terri Berning, Nick Schulze
Problem: Children's Decisions Based on Parents' Decisions

New Lebanon
New Lebanon Middle School Team #2
Grade Level: 7th - 8th
Team Members: Brandon Hoskins, Michael Morgan, C.J. Osborne, Amber Rollins
Advisor: Pam Crabtree
Problem: Cheating: Students' and Teachers' Perspectives

Roseville
Roseville Middle School
Grade Level: 7th - 8th
Team Members: Christine Bobb, Andrew Colley, Josh Grant, Tim Kennedy, Elisha Kinsley, Crystal Moore, Ashley Venable
Advisor: Cindy Brandt, M. Jane Smith
Problem: Apathy and Boredom

Struthers
Struthers Middle School
Grade Level: 8th
Team Members: Zayna Awadallah, Alissa Barth, Matt Cramer, Tony Marr, Rick Rodriguez, Shelley Stenglein, Mikel Walker, Patrick Watt
Advisor: John Grandy, Nanette Izzo, Tom Lenton
Problem: School Delinquency: Another Approach

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THEME 5
PERSONAL PROBLEMS AND SCHOOL PROBLEMS

PROBLEM:

Through their research and involvement in the Youth for Justice project, these teams discovered that self-esteem has a significant effect on young people's attitudes and resulting behavior. They learned that teens gain self-esteem in two main places: in the family and at school. One indicator of low self-esteem is a low expectation of academic success. There is also a link between a lack of self-esteem among individual students and a lack of school pride. These attitudes may also manifest themselves in acts of vandalism; cheating; lack of respect; inappropriate behaviors leading to suspensions and expulsions; and even lack of confidence in the representative system of government.

SOLUTIONS:

Students began programs in their schools to improve student attitudes and create a school environment that rewards accomplishments and commitment. This, in turn, will positively affect the school, the community and ultimately, the students themselves. Some of the solutions include the following:

- Create incentive programs such as "Stop Lights" (making good choices); Make a Difference Day; Random Acts of Kindness; Student of the Week; Morning Quotes; Newspaper in a "Dear Abby" type of format to address students' concerns; Pride/Gratitude Journal; Independence Day (a day for kids to break away from their traditional cliques and reach out to others).

- Promote taking pride in school work by minimizing the acceptability of cheating.

- Encourage more respect for oneself and all others in the school community--by outreaching to future middle school students by going to elementary schools and talking about issues such as respect, peer pressure, and drugs.

- Reduce inappropriate behavior leading to suspensions and expulsions. The solutions proposed by the students include both the carrot and the stick approaches. As carrots they suggest that teachers make school more interesting and student-oriented, that administrators reward perfect attendance, and that community businesses could donate items or funds to area schools to provide incentive programs for attendance and appropriate behavior; and finally that state government supply funding for teachers in the in-school suspension room so learning can still take place for chronic offenders.

In turn, students and parents might be motivated by certain "sticks," such as making students aware that time missed from class will be made up, perhaps through community service hours/instruction and by requiring parents to accompany unruly students to class. Parents will also be made aware of the PARENT RESPONSIBILITY ACT. This act holds parents responsible for their child's actions. Parents can be fined up to $100.00 or spend time in jail. This was recently adopted in some communities.

- Develop student self-esteem and a sense of pride in both themselves and their school by encouraging parents to make sure that children know how important they are by telling them that you love them. Teachers can assist in this effort by giving more praise and small rewards (e.g. homework passes) for students who complete their homework. School administrators can help by considering free admission to school activities and sports events as a reward for positive student behavior.

- Reduce student apathy about school and the value of schoolwork because of the economic problems in their community and their uncertainty about their personal and community's economic future by involving the students in completing a community-based Senior Citizen/Teen Center through fundraising and volunteer efforts.

- Encourage new students and all students to adopt positive attitudes and behavior and not follow or fall in with the "wrong group." Form a committee of students known for their scholarship and positive school involvement as a leadership group. A member of this leadership group will be assigned to new student classes to orient them early in the school year to get involved in school activities.

- Reduce teen pregnancy by encouraging greater communication between parents and their children.

- Since parents have an enormous impact on their children's attitudes and behavior, solutions proposed revolve around ways to get parents more involved with their children and their children's school programs: Start a public relations campaign that would get parents involved; advertise school programs in the local community newspaper; establish support groups where parents and children can discuss their problems; encourage local businesses and companies to allow parents to spend more time with their children rather than requiring them to work overtime.

- Promote confidence in the representative system of government by establishing a Peer Council composed of representative peers and administration. Youth learn that they possess the power to bring about desirable change by working WITHIN the system.

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THEME 6
CRIME, GANGS, AND GUNS

Springfield
Lagonda Elementary School
Grade Level: 5th
Team Members: Nic DeWitt, Nic Weems, Brittany Werner, Alison Finney, Victoria Barger
Advisor: Jacqueline Reeb
Problem: Gangs in the Elementary School

London
London Middle School
Grade Level: 6th
Team Members: Sarah Barnes, Bryan Blair, Amber Johnson, Carl Johnson, Gregg Trueb, Kari Weibel
Advisor: Adelle Faulkner
Problem: Store Theft

Cincinnati
Peoples Middle School
Grade Level: 7th
Team Members: Amanda Chambers, Brandon Edwards, Kelly Horton, Michaela Kelley, Brandy Richardson, Lynette Shearer, Brandi Starks
Advisor: Sara Splain Krailler
Problem: Gangs: A Deadly Mistake

Canton
Taft Middle School
Grade Level: 7th
Team Members: Chris Dunfee, Samantha Langhein, Steve Modich, Tionna Peak, Tiffany Phillips, Shannon Stidom
Advisor: Mrs. Haymond, Joel McNenny
Problem: Lack of After-School Activities

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"MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, WHO MAY BE TARGETS FOR TEEN GANG- OR GUN-RELATED CRIME, ARE ALSO IN POSITIONS TO OBSERVE THE UNFOLDING OF BEHAVIORS LEADING TO SUCH VIOLENCE."

Lorain
Lorain Middle School
Grade Level: 7th - 8th
Team Members: Veda Jackson, Denise James, Denise Johnson, Jeremy Kudela, Starsha McGee, Jose Ramos, Roshita Taylor, Trista Williams
Advisor: Myrna Tomazic
Problem: Gun Safety

Gilboa
Pandora-Gilboa Middle School
Grade Level: 8th
Team Members: Candi Candia, Jessica Klima, Josh Leightner, Cassandra Luginbill, Shawna Reichenbach, Stacy Smith
Advisor: Mary Jo Knott
Problem: Youth Violence Leading to Trouble with the Law

Lancaster
Thomas Ewing Junior High School Team #1
Grade Level: 7th - 8th
Team Members: Rebekah Diehl, Jodi Greathouse, Julie Lockwood, Serena Rowe, James Schorr,
Advisor: Christopher Emsign, Kathie Gallagher
Problem: Gangs

Mason
Western Row Elementary School
Grade Level: 5th
Team Members: Hayley Day, Billy Fultz, Miranda Grimes, Jennifer Lamb, Drew Lehrian, Elizabeth Nowel, Greg Williams
Advisor: Becky Howard, Pam Williams
Problem: Gun Violence in Our Society

(Not Pictured)
Highland Hills
Cuyahoga Hills Boy School
Grade Level: 9th - 11th
Team Members: Michael, Jessie, Jonathan, Robert, Nordell, Justus
Advisor: Bernadette Zundel
Problem: Theft and Its Consequences

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YOUTH FOR JUSTICE 1997 OHIO

THEME 6
CRIMES, GANGS, AND GUNS

PROBLEM:

Crime has a negative effect upon families and communities, particularly when perpetrated by young people. Middle and high school students, who may be targets for teen gang- or gun-related crime, are also in positions to observe the unfolding of behaviors leading to such violence.

Students suggested the following reasons why teen crime, including gang- and gun-related crime, may be on the rise:

- Low self-esteem caused by family problems may induce teens to turn to gangs in order to feel powerful, loved, and/or needed.
- Teens who can find nothing constructive to do with their time, especially after school, may resort to crime to relieve boredom.
- Theft is an increasing problem which both creates a negative environment and can escalate into violence. Apathy, lack of respect for others' property, and failure to internalize a moral code of conduct or to empathize with crime victims may lead to such criminal behavior.
- Natural curiosity combined with lack of proper safety education about firearms may contribute to gun-related violence among teens.

SOLUTIONS:

Having interviewed judges, human service workers, community leaders, a store manager, and fellow classmates, students identified a number of solutions, including the following:

- Develop and encourage participation in positive after-school activities, work with local YMCAs to develop teen-oriented activities, and organize all-night "lock-ins" for students to "keep them off the streets." Find sponsors to help fund programs which are not currently available.
- Establish a peer counseling program at school in order to decrease students' perceptions of inferiority and work to resolve problems which could erupt into criminal behavior. Encourage community funding of professional in-school counseling where such funding is absent or insufficient.

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THEME 6
CRIME, GANGS, AND GUNS

- Reduce store theft by working with store managers on possible solutions. Invite store managers to speak to students about the problem of theft and institute school programs to teach students about theft.

- Design a flyer to suggest ways of preventing theft in the community; distribute to faculty members. Focus on victim awareness and personal development through participation in study groups

- Publicize children's need for family closeness by joining with parents to:
  (1) create a public service announcement or write articles designed to help adults understand their key role in helping children stay away from gangs
  (2) organize and advertise family fun nights

- Organize special classes for parents of teens who are engaged in violent behavior in order to help them redirect their children, and establish a violence hotline as a resource.

- Educate middle school students about gun safety and train them to serve as "peer tutors" for gun safety. Also, visit preschool and elementary classrooms as well as other youth groups to introduce a gun safety program.

- Develop pamphlets and posters, and write poems stressing the importance of gun safety and educating the public.

Dear Mr. President:

These guns are getting out of hand!
Someone got shot in our school band.
It wasn't an accident no-ser-ry!
Someone got shot and it could have
been me!
Now he's buried lying in the ground!
He was my best friend in this town!
We have got to put a stop to all these gun
shots, put the murderer on the spot!
Put him away in jail--throw away the key,
it'll be safer for you and me!

The Western Row
Youth For Justice Team

Guns

Guns, guns, everywhere,
Don't people know the law?
Kids today would rather share,
A gun instead of a ball.
Our childhood has been taken away,
today it's not the same,
Yesterday we laughed and played,
Today it's a different game.
Children playing with a gun,
Outside of school,
One was shot having fun,
Now do you think it's cool?

by Jennifer Lamb
Western Row Youth for Justice Team

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APPENDIX

WILLETTS MIDDLE SCHOOL

Youth For Justice Student Survey

Dear Students,

This is a survey from Youth for Justice. We are trying to help students and teachers by making Willetts a safer and better place to learn. Please answer honestly by circling a number, one being a small problem and five being the biggest problem. Thank you.

---

1)Someone is repeatedly touching you, even when you say no. (1) 2 3 4 5

2) Are the lunch lines still a problem? 1 2 3 (4) 5

3) Is fighting a problem? verbal? 1 2 (3) 4 5
Physical? 1 (2) 3 4 5

4) Is swearing in the halls a prob? 1 2 3 (4) 5

5) Is the dress code a prob? (1) 2 3 4 5

6) Is gang activity? (1) 2 3 4 5

7) Is there predjudice/discrimination? (1) 2 3 4 5
by wealth? (1) 2 3 4 5 by age? (1) 2 3 4 5
Because of friends? (1) 2 3 4 5

8) Is there peer pressure here? 1 2 3 (4) 5

9) Is socks with sandals a good rule? 1 2 3 4 (5)

10) Are spirit days working? 1 2 3 4 (5)

Thanks for your cooperation.

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THANKS!

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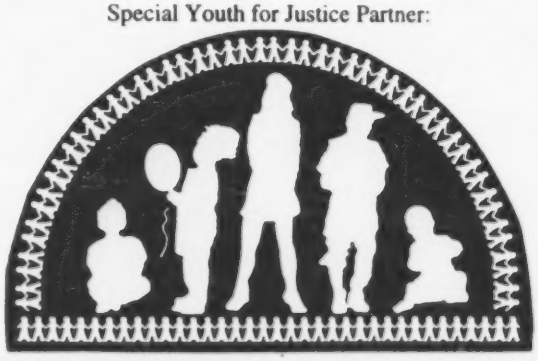

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Investing in Ohio's future through advocacy for youth.

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